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## Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

### PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by the Reverend Dr. Douglas Gerdtts, Senior Pastor of First and Central Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, DE.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Would you pray with me, please.

Holy God, little can be said that doesn't add to the cacophony of prayer that arises from humanity. Surely from this august Chamber the volume and intensity is at times deafening. Yet these, O God, are the servants of the people and of You. So like Solomon we pray, "Here's what we want: Give us a God-listening heart so we can lead Your people well, discerning the difference between good and evil. For who on their own is capable of leading Your good people?"

Who indeed, O God.

Our prayer this morning is quiet and simple: Instill wisdom and compassion, the quest for peace and the drive for justice, the humility to recognize our ignorance and the grace to welcome another's point of view, and the awe of the responsibility conveyed upon us and the gratitude to relish our part in shaping the future. Most of all, let us never think that we travel this road alone, for who on their own is capable of leading Your good people?

Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable TOM UDALL led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, September 20, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I yield to my friend from Delaware and ask that I be recognized when he finishes his remarks.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

### WELCOMING THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise today to express my gratitude to Leader REID and to Chaplain Black, to all of us in the Chamber, and my gratitude to the Reverend Dr. Douglas Gerdtts. It is my honor and privilege to welcome him to our Chamber this morning as one of Delaware's strongest and finest faith leaders.

Reverend Gerdtts leads the congregation at First and Central Presbyterian

Church in Wilmington. Each time I join with him on Sunday mornings, I am uplifted by the stirring music, I am challenged by his passionate sermons, and I leave engaged for the week, rooted in my faith and moved forward by his words and by his leadership.

But Reverend Gerdtts' leadership extends far beyond the walls of his church. It touches those most in need in our community. The church literally opens its doors every Saturday, welcoming in homeless Delawareans as well as welcoming in schoolchildren who need smaller class sizes and better instruction to succeed.

I have had the pleasure of knowing Reverend Gerdtts for more than a dozen years. In my own service in county government I knew him as chair of the Diversity Commission, and he helped lead the charge for equality and civil unions in Delaware last year. He has made a real and lasting contribution to our community. He and his wonderful wife Walle are part of what makes Delaware a great place.

As he shared with us in his prayer, he is exactly the sort of person who, through a listening heart, has become a powerful and effective servant leader of faith in my home community.

My thanks to the Chaplain for allowing guest Chaplains, and my thanks to Rev. Doug Gerdtts for his friendship, his faith, and his leadership.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Senator from Delaware has been such a great addition to the Senate. He is well respected on both sides of the aisle, and he is a man of spiritual quality. Among his other attributes, he has a divinity degree from Yale University. Without elaborating, I am just so pleased he is my friend and a Member of the Senate.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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